

## Southeast Region

# Hurricane Katrina Report

September 15-19, 2005



The Service's Incident Management Team located in Lacombe, Louisiana at Big Branch NWR, continue community service activities. To date, crews have cleared 243 driveways, 14 1/2 miles of roadway, four major parking lots, including opening access to the Louisiana Heart Hospital, New Castle School, and the local Post Office. They have also conducted reconnaissance on 65 miles of roadways, including more than 100 streets, hauled 106 truck loads of debris, and responded to several wildland fires. More than 18,000 meals have been served to those engaged in the relief effort. People in the community often stop Service employees to express their gratitude for the assistance.

On Thursday, a Service team began clearing approximately seven miles of primary flood control ditches and canals, as well as 40 miles of clogged secondary ditches in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi. City officials requested support because of potential flood concerns in debris—choked ditches needed to prevent flooding. The debris consists of the remnants of houses and structures spanning the entire coastline of the city that were damaged or destroyed by the huge storm surge that exceeded 30 feet. Debris was pushed about one-half-mile inland, landing in the ditches. To date, 3 1/2 miles have been cleared.

A chainsaw crew opened access to a home in Slidell where they discovered a 70-year old musician who had been trapped since the hurricane. Though he was in desperate need of food and water, he was reluctant to leave his home until law enforcement officers promised to get his guitar tuned for him. He once played for Gate Mouth Brown.

Eight boats were dispatched to Zephyr Field (FEMA Command Center) to assist California Task Force 3 in

searching an area on either side of Elysion Fields Boulevard. Two deceased individuals were located in the area; however, receding water levels limited boat operations.

Pumps draining water from Bayou Sauvage NWR were temporarily shut down, but are now back in operation. A four-mile stretch of Interstate 10 running through the refuge remains underwater. It is expected to take four to five days to remove the water.

Service fire personnel continue to work on establishing fire breaks, which is extremely critical because several fires have broken out in surrounding areas.

Acting Service Director Matt Hogan toured the impacted areas to assess the damage and observe the ongoing community service activities.

### Additional information:

Media contact coordination is being handled by the Regional Office of External Affairs 404/679 7287.



USFWS/Tom MacKenzie

*FWS Refuge Law Enforcement Officer Mike Downie (L), Bogue Chitto NWR, and Bubber Carnathan, Teddy Roosevelt NWR, during sea-borne search and rescue operations in Lacombe and Slidell, Louisiana.*



USFWS/Tom MacKenzie

*Glen Stratton, Merritt Island NWR in Florida, supervises crew clearing flood control canals at Bay St. Louis, Mississippi.*